

Assessment vs Grading

When we approach faculty about assessing student learning, faculty typically reply that they already assess students and it's called the student's grade. However, this viewpoint misses the point entirely as to what value assessment plays in instruction.

Assessment is the analysis and use of data by students, faculty, and/or departments to make decisions about improvements in teaching and learning.

Grading (or evaluation) is the analysis and use of data by faculty to make judgments about student performance. It includes the determination of a single assigned grade or a pass/fail decision for an individual assignment or for a course.

The difference is illustrated below:

Assessment	Grading (Evaluation)
A team of faculty members analyzes examination results of all students in a course and discovers that 65% of the students did not demonstrate understanding of an important concept. Faculty members investigate possible causes and plan changes in teaching/learning strategies to improve student comprehension.	A faculty member corrects an examination and assigns a grade of 82% to a student.
A faculty member analyzes the results of oral communication checklists completed for all students in the course section who delivered oral presentations in class, in order to determine opportunities for improving teaching and learning.	A student delivers an oral presentation in class. The faculty member provides a critique of delivery and content accompanied by a grade for the assignment.
The class attendance record indicates that a student has been absent multiple times. The faculty member advises the student in order to facilitate improved attendance, as studies suggest that regular class attendance contributes to student success.	Points are deducted from a student's grade for each class absence, in accordance with a department policy.

Based on materials from: Long Beach City College (<http://outcomes.lbcc.edu/pdf/ASLOvsGrades.pdf>), June 7, 2010, in turn derived from Montgomery College, *California Educator*, May 2010, *The Difference Between Assessment and Evaluation* by H. Stephen Straight, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education, Binghamton University – SUNY, August 2002, and *Clarification of Assessment and Evaluation* by Gloria K. Goldman & Lori E. Zakel, from Sinclair Community College, Assessment Update, May-June 2009.